

## Hazardous Waste Management and Recycling

Most communities in Michigan offer ways to dispose of and recycle waste products from our homes. Recycling and safe disposal of harmful household products can help protect human health and the environment by:

- Reducing water pollution
- Reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions
- Reducing poison-related injuries
- Reducing the need for landfills
- Reducing the harm done to wildlife
- Reducing the damage to forests, rivers, lakes, and wetlands



### Hazardous Household Waste

Proper disposal of hazardous waste helps keep dangerous chemicals out of the air that we breathe and the water that we depend upon for our daily activities. Proper disposal also removes dangerous chemicals from our households where many accidental poisonings occur. Some examples of harmful household waste are toxic cleaning products, pesticides (products that kill bugs), paint, and mercury thermometers.

Go to <http://www.michigan.gov/degreswastecontacts> for a list of household hazardous waste and recycling centers in Michigan or visit <http://www.earth911.org>. For a list of sites that take pesticides and mercury, [click here](#).

### Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drug Waste

Many people getting rid of prescription and over-the-counter medications, vitamins and supplements by flushing them down the toilet or pouring them down the drain. Flushing them can cause pollution in our waterways. The chemicals found in these products have been shown to cause harm to the fish and wildlife living in and near rivers and lakes. People can be exposed to these chemicals when we drink water that's drawn from these bodies of water or eat some kinds of wild game. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) says that the long-term human health risks from exposure to even very small amounts of these chemical is unknown. To find out how to get rid of these products, [click here](#) for a fact sheet on proper disposal.

### Personal Medical Waste

Nearly 600,000 adults in Michigan, age 18 and over, have diabetes.\* Diabetics use "sharps" - syringes, lancelets and needles - as part of their medical treatment. Other people with certain health conditions also use sharps as part of their treatment. If they are not safely disposed of, sharps can:

- Injure waste haulers, children and animals
- Increase the risk of infection
- Pollute the environment

Never place loose sharps in your trash! To learn how to safely get rid of them, [click here](#) and for locations that accept them, [click here](#).



\*Source: Michigan Department of Community Health Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2002 data

# Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

We can help protect our natural resources and reduce the amount of waste produced by following the three **R's: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**.

- Reduce the amount of products that you use
- Reuse products instead of throwing them away
- Recycle waste products

Start some new habits! Reduce the amount of products that you use. Buy only the amount of a product that you need rather than the "economy" size. Donate unused paint to a non-profit agency. Save energy by using compact fluorescent light bulbs instead of standard light bulbs. Look for good, used items at <http://www.freecycle.org>. Reuse and recycle products like plastic grocery bags. Look for products that use less packaging material or that are made from recycled materials. Recycle items like batteries, electronics, plastic, and paper.

Recycling is easy and takes a minimal amount of time. To find recycling guidelines for Michigan households, [click here](#).

To find a list of hazardous household waste and recycling centers in Michigan, Go to <http://www.michigan.gov/deqreswastecontacts> or visit <http://www.earth911.org>.



## Michigan Recycling Annually Reduces

- energy use by 40 billion BTUs
- greenhouse gas emissions by 1.4 million tons
- air emissions by 2.2 million tons
- waterborne wastes by 8,000 tons

Source: Michigan Department of  
Environmental Quality

## Business Waste

The Michigan Recycled Materials Market Directory helps Michigan businesses, organizations, and community collection programs find buyers for recyclable materials including glass, metals, oils and solvents, paper, plastics, pallets and wood. Go to <http://www.michigan.gov/deqrmmd> to access the directory.

The Medical Waste Regulatory Act (MWRA) is a law that controls how medical waste created by health care organizations is managed from the time that it is used until the time that it's thrown away. [Click here](#) for more information.

Learn how to cut down on paper. Visit <http://www.paperrecycles.org> for tips on how to save resources, time, and money by using paper wisely.



## Other useful websites:

**Freecycle:** <http://www.freecycle.org> – A non-profit network of people who reuse items by giving them away and getting them for free

### Electronics Collection:

[http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,1607,7-135-3585\\_4130\\_18096-148774--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,1607,7-135-3585_4130_18096-148774--,00.html) or <http://www.reconnectpartnership.com/index.html> - Find local electronics waste collection sites

### Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs:

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/CFL\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_193840\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/CFL_Fact_Sheet_193840_7.pdf) - Learn how to clean up and dispose of broken CFL bulbs

### Green Lodging:

[http://www.michigan.gov/cis/0,1607,7-154-25676\\_25677\\_37026--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/cis/0,1607,7-154-25676_25677_37026--,00.html) - Find Michigan hotels that are leaders in energy conservation

### Composting:

<http://www.deq.state.mi.us/documents/deq-wmd-swp-compostbroch.pdf> - Composting made simple from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality

### Small electronics and printer cartridges:

[http://www.usps.com/communications/newsroom/2008/pr08\\_028.htm](http://www.usps.com/communications/newsroom/2008/pr08_028.htm) - The United States Postal Service offers free mailing

### Packing Peanuts:

<http://www.loosefillpackaging.com/> - Find collection centers for packing materials known as "packing peanuts"

### Energy Star:

[http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=about\\_ab\\_index](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=about_ab_index) - Find products that use less energy from the Environmental Protection Agency

### Direct Marketing Association:

<https://www.dmaconsumers.org/cgi/offmailing> - Remove your name from junk mailing lists and save resources

### Catalog Choice:

<http://www.catalogchoice.org> - Stop unwanted catalogs from showing up in your mailbox.

### Paper Recycling:

<http://www.paperrecycles.org> – Learn about ways for homes, schools, and businesses to recycle paper and save trees

### Lead Free Fishing Tackle:

<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/oea/reduce/sinkers.cfm> - Use lead free fishing tackle from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

## *For more information, contact:*

**Michigan Department of Community Health - (517) 335-8350 or (800) 648-6942**

**Michigan Department of Environmental Quality – Recycling: (517) 373-8422  
Household Hazardous Waste (517) 373-1322**

## Website addresses:

Michigan recycling and hazardous household waste collection centers:  
<http://www.michigan.gov/deqreswastecontacts>

Michigan recycling guidelines:  
[http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,1607,7-135-3585\\_4130-33651--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,1607,7-135-3585_4130-33651--,00.html)

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